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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON MAR DE PLATA AND FTAA, NOVEMBER  
02, 2005

1. On 10/21 the Tegucigalpa-based liberal daily "La Tribuna" published an editorial entitled "Mar De Plata." "The presidents who will meet at the Summit of the Americas will discuss Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), the subject that will steal all the attention, unemployment and poverty. The organizers of the Mar de Plata Summit announced that 80% of the declaration has been agreed to; the other 20% will include delicate issues, such as FTAA, promoted by the U.S."

"The fact that FTAA is mentioned in the presidents' final Declaration has been the powder keg between the American presidents."

"Bush, whose administration is passing through a difficult time, is going (to the Summit) with the purpose of improving his image and relations with the region that have been set aside by Washington as a consequence of the terrorist attacks. Even though the main issue promoted by the North American government is the FTAA, it will find strong opposition from several South American governments, especially Venezuela which is promoting its own alternative (Summit of the People)."

"Social and political groups have organized a parallel summit called the 'Third Summit of the People' to draw the media's attention as much as to highlight the differences with the Mar de Plata Summit. A delicate situation that the host country will have to balance when there is a threat of demonstrations due to the presence of the North American President in Argentina. The Honduran President will not attend the Summit because this time he will remain in Honduras helping the 11,000 victims of Hurricane 'Beta.'"

Williard